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Symington Defends CIA Against Charge Of Blundering, Secrecy

Tells Senate Agency Carries Out U.S. Policy in an Effective Manner

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WASHINGTON.—Senator Stuart Symington (Dem.), Missouri, just back for an extensive Asian tour, ridiculed charges Friday that the Central Intelligence Agency is a blundering, free-wheeling invisible government.

He told the Senate he found in Vietnam and every other country that CIA operations are aimed at carrying out official United States policy and are fully approved by the American ambassador.

"The American public should be proud of this organization and its people, a group who serve their country with unstinting devotion," Senator Symington said.

It is easy for critics to make false accusations against the secret spy organization because CIA does not talk about its actions and cannot defend itself, the Senator said.

MORE RECKLESS

In the last few years, there have been increasing attacks in this country, often from leftists, on the CIA.

The theme has been that the agency is reckless and war-provoking, operates without approval of the President or Secretary of State, and is staffed in incompetent adventurers.

In his reply, Senator Symington said he has had intimate knowledge of CIA activities for over 10 years.

"I have always been impressed with the integrity and professional competence of the agency's representatives," he said.

Only twice, he said, has he discovered "anything to the contrary." Mr. Symington said he doubts that these instances, which he did not explain, could happen under present CIA rules.

In his recent trip, the Senator said, he discussed CIA activities with American Ambassadors and CIA personnel throughout the far

COMPLETE APPROVAL

Every ambassador, he said, "expressed his complete approval of the functioning of the agency."

He said that under a system of rules and controls, it would be "difficult, if not impossible," for CIA to get out of bounds.

"The CIA has a difficult and at times a very dangerous mission to perform," the senator said.

"Not all men or women of this or any other agency are perfect."

But he said he agrees with Secretary of State Dean Rusk who recently praised the "galantary and high degree of competence in those who have to help us with that part of the struggle for freedom."

Senator Symington was appointed this week to the select group of senior members of the Senate Armed Services Committee who oversee the CIA.